

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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USEEC
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SUBJECT: MAY 26 VISIT OF BURUNDI'S PRESIDENT BAGAZA TO
-- THE EC

1. EC COMMISSION OFFICIALS IN THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR DEVELOPMENT HAVE GIVEN MISSION OFFICER A READOUT ON BURUNDI PRESIDENT BAGAZA'S MAY 26 VISIT TO COMMISSION HEADQUARTERS. THIS VISIT, ESSENTIALLY AN APPENDIX TO HIS OFFICIAL CONVERSATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF BELGIUM, WAS LARGELY PROTOCOLARY IN NATURE, ACCORDING TO OUR COMMISSION SOURCES. BAGAZA WAS RECEIVED BY COMMISSIONER FOR AGRICULTURE GUNDELACH, PLUS EC REPRESENTATIVES AT THE DIRECTOR GENERAL LEVEL, SINCE BOTH COMMISSION PRESIDENT JENKINS AND COMMISSIONER FOR DEVELOPMENT, CLAUDE CHEYSSON, WERE ABSENT FROM BRUSSELS. COMMISSION OFFICIALS TELL US, HOWEVER, THAT THE VISIT WAS SUCCESSFUL, AND THAT THERE ARE NO MAJOR CONTENTIOUS ISSUES BETWEEN THE EC AND THE BURUNDI GOVERNMENT. IN THIS REGARD, THE EC'S DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR BURUNDI (UNDER THE LOME CONVENTION) REPORTEDLY

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IS PROCEEDING ACCORDING TO SCHEDULE.

2. BAGAZA'S DISCUSSIONS AT THE EC WERE FOLLOWED BY A PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE REVIEWED THE PURPOSES OF HIS VISIT TO BRUSSELS, AND ALLUDED TO CERTAIN "CHANGES" WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN BURUNDI SINCE HE CAME TO POWER IN 1976. REGARDING THE INTERNAL SITUATION THERE, BAGAZA POINTED OUT

THAT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN
"MISINTERPRETED" BY SOME EUROPEANS: THE 1976 COUP, FOR
EXAMPLE, WAS NOT SIMPLY A MILITARY TAKEOVER, BUT A CON-
SEQUENCE OF DISSATISFACTION OF BURUNDI'S PEOPLE WITH "THE
CORRUPTION" OF PRECEDING REGIMES. SINCE HIS GOVERNMENT
TOOK POWER, BAGAZA ARGUED, FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES HAVE
OCCURRED:

-- BURUNDI'S LEADERSHIP HAS FOLLOWED A POLICY OF NATIONAL
RECONCILIATION BASED ON INTEGRATION OF ALL ELEMENTS OF
THE POPULATION;

-- THE FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION
HAS BEEN LAID THROUGH THE MECHANISM OF A SINGLE NATIONAL
PARTY;

-- ECONOMIC CHANGES HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT WITH THE
OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING NATIONAL RECOVERY (BURUNDI WELCOMES
OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE IN THIS EFFORT);

-- REFORM OF THE SOCIAL SYSTEM HAS BEEN GIVEN HIGH
PRIORITY, INCLUDING ELIMINATION OF "FEUDAL" ANACHRONISMS
IN FISCAL AND AGRICULTURAL MATTERS.

3. TURNING TO BURUNDI'S EXTERNAL POLICIES, BAGAZA REFERRED
TO THREE "GUIDING PRINCIPLES" WHICH INFLUENCE HIS GOVERN-
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MENT'S ACTION:

-- "GOOD NEIGHBOR" POLICY: GIVEN THE GEOGRAPHIC POSITION
OF BURUNDI, SECURE BORDERS ARE NECESSARY IN ACCORD WITH
OAU DOCTRINE. IN THIS CONTEXT, THERE IS NOW A "CONSENSUS"
AMONG ZAMBIA, RWANDA AND BURUNDI; HOPEFULLY IT WILL BE
EXTENDED SOON TO INCLUDE TANZANIA.

-- NON-ALIGNMENT: AFRICAN STATES, BY RIGHT AND NECESSITY,
MUST AVOID BEING PAWNS IN SUPER-POWER RIVALRY.

-- INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: AS LONG AS BURUNDI'S NATIONAL
INDEPENDENCE IS RESPECTED, ASSISTANCE FROM ANY SOURCE
(E.G., UNITED STATES, SOVIET UNION OR PRC) WOULD BE
WELCOME.

4. CONCERNING RECENT EVENTS IN AFRICA, BAGAZA SAID THAT
HE SUPPORTS LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN THEIR FIGHT FOR
DECOLONIZATION. HOWEVER, INTERVENTION IN AFRICA BY OUTSIDE
FORCES IS UNDESIRABLE, SINCE IT RISKS INVOLVING THE CONTI-
NENT IN "COLD WAR". THIS WOULD BE A TRAGEDY FOR THE
AFRICAN PEOPLES. BAGAZA SAID HE IS EQUALLY SKEPTICAL

REGARDING THE CREATION OF A PAN-AFRICAN INTERVENTION FORCE, RECALLING THAT THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE OF THE OAU HAS BEEN DISCUSSING THAT ISSUE FOR 15 YEARS WITHOUT RESULT. HE COMMENTED: "WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO SET UP SUCH A FORCE AT ONCE, NOR ARE AFRICANS READY TO DO SO. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PREREQUISITES. GIVEN THE PRESENT CONDITION OF AFRICAN STATES, THEIR ARMIES AND THEIR ECONOMIC POTENTIAL, I DOUBT THAT THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE." TURNING TO THE ATTACK ON KOLWEZI, BAGAZA STATED THAT "THE PROBLEM HINGES IN THE FIRST INSTANCE ON ZAIRE'S INTERNAL POLICY, AND ALSO ON THAT OF THE STATES BORDERING ON SHABA." BURUNDI, HE ADDED, IS INDIRECTLY CONCERNED BECAUSE IT HAS FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH ZAIRE. WHILE THE GOB SUPPORTS FRENCH-BELGIAN HUMANITARIAN ACTION TO RELIEVE EXPATRIATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CIVILIANS IN SHABA, BAGAZA SAID HE IS CONCERNED THAT INTERVENTIONS OF A HUMANITARIAN NATURE SHOULD NOT LEAD TO "ANOTHER KIND" OF INTERVENTION. HINTON

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